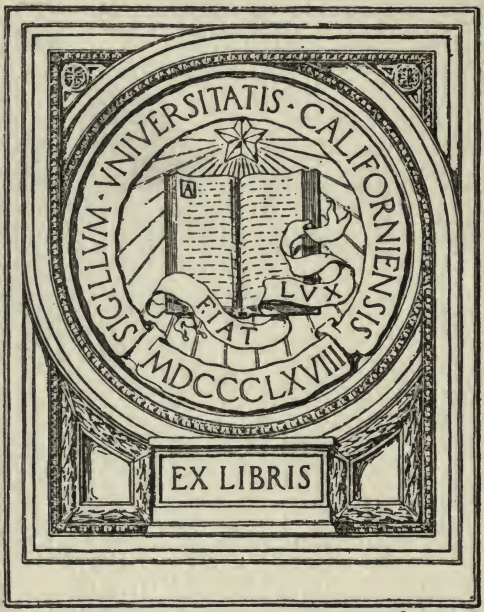
UC-NRLF
$B 613 980

More
Translations
from Heine


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

869h
no

More Translations from Heine

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

TRANSLATIONS FROM HEINE
AND GOETHE

More Translations from Heine

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

By

Philip G. L. Webb

C.B., C.B.E.

London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
Ruskin House, 40 Museum St., W.C. 1

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

First published in 1920

(*All rights reserved*)

Contents

	PAGE
From Die Harzreise	9
From Die Heimkehr	18
From Lyrisches Intermezzo	44
The Twilight of the Gods	65
Ratcliff	69
Donna Clara	74
Almansor	78
From Romanzen	84
Sonnets	87
Asra	89
From Neuer Frühling	90
Bimini	92

716895

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/moretranslations00heinrich

MORE TRANSLATIONS FROM HEINE

From Die Harzreise

Prologue

COATS of black and silken stockings,
Courtly ruffles white as snow,
Soft discourse and friendly greetings—
If there were but hearts below !

Hearts to beat within those bosoms,
Hearts to love, and hearts to melt !—
I am sick of all your ballads
Feigning woes you never felt !

I will hie me to the mountains,
Where the peaceful châlets be,
Where the lungs can breathe unstifled,
Where the winds are blowing free.

I will hie me to the mountains,
Where the dark pine-forests lie,
Where birds sing and streamlets whisper,
Where the clouds sweep proudly by.

Fare ye well, ye polished salons,
Sirs and Madams, polished too!
I will hie me to the mountains,
And look down and laugh at you!

On the Hardenberg

RISE again, ye dreams forgotten !
Heart, unclose thy secret door !
Song's delights and tears of sorrow
In one stream united pour.

I will wander through the pine-woods,
Where the babbling fountain springs,
Where the lordly stags are roaming,
Where the lovely throstle sings.

I will hie me to the mountains,
To the rugged rocky land,
Where the grey old castle-ruins
In the light of morning stand.

There I'll sit me down and ponder
On the old days past and dead,
On the prime of vanished peoples,
On the glories that have fled.

Now the jousting-lists are grass-grown,
Where the doughty champion fought,
Who, the strongest overcoming,
Won the prize that all had sought.

O'er the balcony climbs ivy,
  Where stood once the lovely dame,
Who the mighty overcomer
  With her bright eyes overcame.

Conquering lord and conquering lady—
  Both has death's hand conquered now—
That lean knight with scythe on shoulder
  In the dust lays all men low.

The Shepherd Boy

KINGLIKE is the shepherd laddie,
Throned upon the grassy down;
Right above his head the sunshine
Makes a glorious golden crown.

At his feet the sheep are lying,
Red-crossed minions of the state;
And his knighthood are the heifers
Strutting with their pompous gait.

And the kids are his court-players;
And the song-birds and the kine
Furnish all his chamber-music
With their bells and flutings fine.

And the singing and the ringing
Such delightful concert keep
With the waterfall and pine-trees
That the king falls fast asleep.

While he sleeps, his place is taken
By his minister, the hound,
Who with deep and sullen baying
Makes the welkin ring around.

Sleepily the young king murmurs,
"Ruling is but grief and pain;
O that with my queen and sweetheart
I were safely home again!

"There my royal head so softly
On my fair queen's bosom lies,
And my empire stretches boundless
In the blue depths of her eyes!"

On the Brocken

NOW at length the east is brightening
With the sun's faint early rays,
Far and wide the mountain summits
Float above the sea of haze.

Had I seven-leagued boots, how swiftly
Would I cross those mountain-fells,
Striding with the speed of whirlwind
Thither where the dear child dwells.

Lightly would I raise the curtains
Hanging round her little bed,
Lightly kiss her on the forehead,
Lightly on her lips so red.

Yet more lightly should my whisper
Those small ears like lilies fill :
" Dream that we have never parted,
Dream that we are lovers still."

ILSE

I AM the Princess Ilse,
In Ilsenstein I dwell;
Come with me to my castle,
There shall we fare right well.

Thy head will I besprinkle
With limpid waters bright,
And thou shalt forget thy sorrows,
Thou sick and weary wight.

In my white arms encompassed,
Pressed to my bosom white,
There shalt thou lie a-dreaming
Of faery-land delight.

I'll fondle thee with kisses,
As once in days long fled
I fondled good Kaiser Heinrich,
Who now is with the dead.

The dead are dead for ever,
And life is the living man s part;
See! I am fair and radiant,
And laughter stirs in my heart.

Come down into my castle,
My crystal castle, and see
How damsels and knights are dancing,
And pages shout with glee;

List how the silk trains rustle,
Spurs clink with a merry din,
Dwarfs play on the drum and the trumpet,
The horn and the violin.

But thou shalt lie pressed to my bosom,
As once Kaiser Heinrich would do;—
His ears I used to seal up
Whenever the trumpet blew.

From Die Heimkehr

X

RESTING on the clouds, the moon
Like a great pomegranate gloweth,
And a path of golden light
O'er the pale grey sea she throweth.

By the shore I walk alone,
Where the wan white waves are falling,
Many and sweet the words I hear,
Sweet words from the water calling.

Ah! the night is all too long,
Needs my heart must speak its pleasure—
Lovely nixies, come ye forth,
Sing and dance your magic measure!

Take my head upon your lap,
Fill me, body and soul, with blisses,
Sing, caress me till I die,
Drawing out my life with kisses.

[The poems from Die Heimkehr and Lyrisches Intermezzo are numbered as in the 1885 edition (Hoffmann and Campe).]

XVIII

On yonder far horizon
All cloudlike seems to swim
The city with its towers,
In evening twilight dim.

Ruffling the water's surface,
A gust of wet wind blows;
The boatman in my wherry
With mournful measure rows.

The sun once more emerging
Shines out above the sea,
And shows me where my dearest
Was lost for ever to me.

XXIII

How canst thou sleep so calmly,
  And know I am alive?
The old passion overcomes me,
  And then my fetters I rive.

Know'st thou the ancient ballad,
  How in the midnight gloom
A dead boy came to his sweetheart
  And dragged her down to his tomb?

Believe me, lovely maiden,
  Sweet child of witchery,
I am alive and stronger
  Than all the dead men be.

XXVI

Ah me, unhappy Atlas ! for a world
I needs must bear, the whole great world of sorrows.
I bear what is past bearing, and within me
My heart is near to breaking.

Proud heart, 'tis thou alone hast willed it so !
For joy thou wouldest have—yea, joy eternal,
Or else eternal torment, and, proud heart,
Thou hast eternal torment !

XXXII

'Tis thought that I am pining
In bitter love-sick woe,
And I too, like the others,
At last believe it so.

Thou little one with the large eyes,
How often to thee did I say—
My love was beyond all telling,
And eating my heart away.

Yet only within my chamber
Have I in such wise spoke,
And ah! when I stood in thy presence
My silence was unbroke.

For there were evil angels,
Who gagged me and made me dumb;
And ah! through these evil angels
Hath all my misery come.

XLII

As the moon with sudden radiance
Pierces the dark veil of night,
So from out time's dusky shadows
Dawns on me a vision bright.

On the deck we all were seated,
Floating proudly down the Rhine,
And its banks, all green with summer,
In the evening sun did shine.

At her feet I sat and brooded,
She was lovely to behold;
O'er her beautiful wan features
Played the sunlight russet-gold.

Lutes were ringing, boys were singing,
Music everywhere and glee!
And the sky was blue above us,
And our hearts were blithe and free.

Hill and castle, wood and meadow,
Fairy-like they floated by;—
And I saw the whole bright picture
Mirrored in my lady's eye.

XLIII

I saw in a dream my belovéd,
A woe-begone woman, forlorn,
Her beauty once so radiant
All faded, marred and worn.

One child by the hand she was leading,
And one on her arm she bore,
Her step and her mien and her garments
Told plain of penury sore.

She staggered across the market,
Meeting with me on the way;
She looks at me; then gently
And sadly to her I say:

"Come with me to my dwelling,
For thou art pale and weak;
With might and main I'll labour
Thy food and drink to seek.

"And I will protect and cherish
Those children who cling to thee there,
And, more than them all, thine own self,
Thou pitiful child of despair.

"The love that I have borne thee,
I'll ever a secret keep,
And when thou art dead, then will I
Sit by thy grave and weep."

XLV

Only wait, be not impatient
If the memory of old wrongs
Leave an undertone of sadness
Even in my latest songs.

Only wait, and this last echo
Of past grief will cease to ring,
And new songs, like flowers in May-time,
From my healèd heart shall spring.

XLVIII

Do not, heart, thy sorrow cherish
But endure thy fate ; for spring
Once again to thee will bring
All that winter made to perish.

And how much is still left over !
And the world, how fair it is !
There, my heart, lies all thy bliss,
If thou meet it as a lover !

L

Child! it would have been thy ruin,
And right earnestly I strove
So that thy dear heart might never
Feel for me the pangs of love.

Yet I could not help regretting
When this task so easy proved;
Many a time I fell a-musing:
What if after all she loved!

LII

Maiden with the mouth so rosy,
With the eyes so sweet and kind,
My belovéd little maiden,
Thou art ever in my mind.

Long are now the winter evenings,
By thy side I fain would be,
In the dear familiar chamber
Sitting, whispering to thee.

To my lips I fain would press it,
That small lily hand of thine,
Fain with tears I would bedew it,
That small lily hand of thine.

LIII

Though outdoors be driving snow,
Though it hail and though it blow,
Rattling every window pane :
Yet I never will complain.
In my heart lie all the while
Love's own portrait and spring's smile.

LV

Does not my pale wan face betray
How love is my undoing?
And wilt thou yet that my proud mouth
Should beggar-like be suing?

This mouth is far too proud for ought
But kisses and light love-making;
Perchance it will utter a mocking word
The while my heart is breaking.

LVI

" Dearest friend, thou art in love,
Smitten sore with Cupid's dart ;
Ever darker grows thy brain,
Ever brighter grows thine heart.

" Dearest friend, thou art in love,
And thou wilt confess it not,
But I see the heart's bright fire
Through thy waistcoat glowing hot."

LVII

I wished with thee to tarry,
Sit by thy side and rest;
Needs must thou from me hurry,
So many duties pressed.

I said that my soul sighed after
Thee always, and only thee;
Thou didst but explode with laughter,
And curtsey derisively.

Thou hast increased the burden
Of my heart-broken distress,
And e'en hast denied me the guerdon
Of one last parting caress.

Yet think not I'll blow out my brains, dear,
Though fate be never so sore!
For every one of these pains, dear,
I've suffered already before.

LVIII

Thine eyes are sapphires raining light
Most lovely and most sweet,
O three times happy is that man
Whom with their love they greet.

Thine heart, it is a diamond
That sparkling facets shows,
O three times happy is that man
For whom with love it glows

Thy lips are rubies—fairer stones
All vainly would one seek,
O three times happy is that man
To whom their love they speak.

Could I but know that happy man,
And find him all alone
In the green wood—his happiness
Would soon, I trow, be flown.

LX

This world and this life, they are all little bits—
A German professor must lend me his wits.
He'll gather together life's various matters,
And a logical system construct from the scraps;
And with his night-cap and his night-gown tatters
He'll patch up the universe—if there are gaps.

LXIII

I wished the whole tide of my sorrows
In one single word to convey,
That so the gay breezes might take it
And gaily bear it away.

They bear it to thee, belovèd,
That word compact of woe ;
Thou hear'st it at every moment,
Thou hear'st it where'er thou go.

And even at night-time in slumber
Scarce shut will thine eyelids be,
Ere into the depths of dreamland
This word shall follow thee.

LXV

He who for the first time loves,
Though unhappy, is a god ;
He who for the second time
Hapless loves—a fool is he.

Such a fool am I, for I love
Once again without requital.
Sun, moon, stars, they all are laughing ;
I am laughing too—and dying.

LXIX

'Twas mid July when last we parted,
I find you again in January ;
You revelled then in the heat of summer,
Now you are chilly and cold, perdie.

Once more I depart, once more come hither,
And you are neither warm nor cold ;
I pace the ground where you lie buried,
And this heart of mine is sad and old.

LXXV

On thy white shoulder pillowed,
  My head against thee pressed,
I overheard the secret
  That all thy heart possessed.

The Blue Hussars with their music
  Come riding to town to-day,
To-morrow my heart's own darling
  Will leave me and go away.

And what though thou leave me to-morrow?
  To-day thou belongest to me,
And when thy fair arms embrace me
  Then shall I twice blessèd be

LXXVI

The Blue Hussars with their music
Are riding out of the town ;
So I am come back to thee, dearest,
Bringing a rosy crown.

It was wild work with the soldiers
And country rabble around !
And even within thy small heart
Many their quarters found !

LXXVIII

Hast thou truly come to hate me?
Hast thou truly altered quite?
All the world shall be my witness
How I suffered thy despite.

O ye lips, ye lips ungrateful,
Say, how could you slander so
Him, who with such deep devotion
Used to kiss you, long ago?

LXXXVIII

Dark and strange ways am I wending—
  Heart is sick and limbs are sore ;—
Ah, like balm from heaven descending,
  Sweet moon, doth thy radiance pour !

Sweet moon, thou hast chased and banished
  With thy beams night's spectral fears ;
All my bitter grief hath vanished,
  And mine eyes are wet with tears.

LXXXIX

'Tis death that is the cool fresh night,
Life is the hot and sultry day ;
It darkens ; I am weary,
Worn out by the garish light.

Over my bed is standing a tree,
Where sings the love-lorn nightingale,
And with my dreams there mingles
The throb of her ecstacy.

From Lyrisches Intermezzo

VII

MY spirit on love's quest flieth
And dives in the lily's bell;
The lily a faint song sigheth
Of her that I love so well.

The song doth tremble and waver
As it were her mouth's own kiss,
Whereof I had once the savour,
That sweet strange hour of bliss.

IX

On wings of poesy flying,
I'll bear thee, belovéd, away,
To where by the Ganges is lying
A sweet spot fairer than day.

There blooms the rosiest of bowers
Under the moonlight clear ;
And there the lotus flowers
Wait for their sister dear.

The violets whisper and flutter,
And gaze at the stars up above ;
The roses murmuring utter
Sweet secret stories of love.

Gazelles so gentle and clever
Come hopping closer to hear ;
The flood of the holy river
Booms in the distance far.

There let us, love, earthward sinking,
Under a palm alight,
And there, love's potion drinking,
Dream one long dream of delight

XVIII

No plaint I make, and though my heart may break,
O love for ever lost, no plaint I make.
While thou all shining goest in diamonds bright
No brightness shines within thy heart's dark night.

Long since I knew. In dreams I saw thee plain,
And saw the night that in thy soul doth reign;
I saw the serpent feeding on thy heart;
I saw, my love, how very sad thou art.

XIX

Yea ! thou art sad too and no plaint I make—
Belovéd, sad indeed we both must be !
Until death come our tortured hearts to break,
Belovéd, sad indeed we both must be.

The scorn which curls thy lip, I see it well,
And see the anger flashing in thine eye,
And see the pride which makes thy bosom swell,
And yet, and yet, thou art as sad as I.

About those lips an unseen sorrow lurks,
A hidden tear clouds thine eye's clarity,
A secret wound in thy proud bosom irks—
Belovéd, sad indeed we both must be.

XX

I hear the flute and the fiddle
And trumpets clashing between ;
And there, the bride in the middle,
Is dancing my heart's own queen

I hear the kettledrum throbbing
And drone of bagpipe deep ;
Betwixt I hear sighing and sobbing—
'Tis the good angels weep.

XXI

Hast thou forgot so utterly
How long thy heart belonged to me,
That small heart so sweet, so compact of deceit,
That nothing could be more deceitful and sweet?

And hast thou forgotten the pain and the love,
Which almost my heart to misery drove?
I know not if love were the greater, or pain,
This only I know, that great were the twain.

XXII

And if of my heart's desolation
The little flowrets but knew,
Their tears of consolation
Would fall like healing dew.

And if of my lovelorn sadness
The nightingales could divine,
They'd warble songs of gladness
For sorrow's anodyne.

And if how my soul is riven
The little gold stars could guess,
They'd come down out of their heaven
To comfort my distress.

But all are cold and unheeding,
One only my pain hath known—
For her my heart is bleeding,
For her and her alone.

XXIV

They whispered many stories,
And much they found to scold ;
But wherefore my heart so sore is,
That secret they never told.

They raked up everything evil,
They shook their wise heads and grieved ;
They nicknamed me the devil,
And thou hast all believed.

Yet what was far the saddest,
That thing they have never guessed ;
The saddest thing and the maddest,
I carry that locked in my breast.

XXV

The lime was in blossom, the nightingale sang,
The sun was smiling with friendly cheer :
Then into my arms with kisses you sprang,
And held me clasped to your bosom near.

The leaves fell ; hoarse was the raven's cry ;
The sun looked down with disconsolate face ;
Then bade we each other an icy " Good-bye,"
And you dropt a curtsey with courtliest grace.

XXX

The violets blue her eyes that light,
The roses red of her cheeks' delight,
The lilies white of her hands so slight,
They blossom and blossom for ever and aye,
And only her heart hath withered away.

XXXI

The sky is so blue, and the earth is so bright,
And the zephyrs are breathing so balmy and light,
And the meadow so gaily with flowers is dight,
Which sparkle and glitter with dewdrops white,
And the people are everywhere filled with delight :
Yet would that I lay in my grave at rest,
Clasping my dead love close to my breast.

XXXV

When my love first went away,
Laughter died upon that day,
Folks made ribald jests enow,
But to laugh I knew not how.

When I lost her utterly,
Weeping too was done for me;
Nigh heartbroken am I now,
But to weep I know not how.

XXXVIII

Full many an image rises
  Out of its grave to tell
How once in times forgotten
  I used near thee to dwell.

In day-time oft a-dreaming
  About the streets would I gad;
The people would mark me and wonder,
  I was so silent and sad.

At night-time it was better,
  The streets all empty were;
I and my shadow together
  Went noiselessly everywhere

My way with echoing footsteps
  Over the bridge I took;
The moon, from the clouds emerging,
  Watched me with sad, grave look.

I lingered before thy dwelling,
  I stood and gazed above,
I gazed up to thy window—
  My heart was sick with love.

Thou hast, I know, from that window
Looked down full many a night,
And seen me stand like a statue
There in the pale moon-light.

L

They sat round the tea-table speaking
  Of love and the ways one loved ;
The men for fine phrases were seeking,
  The ladies were melting and moved.

" I favour the love platonic,"
  The starched old statesman said ;
His wife gave a smile ironic,
  Then sighing she shook her head.

The canon clinches the question :
  " Love never should be, say I,
Too fierce, or it spoils the digestion ; "
  The maiden murmurs, " But why ? "

" Nay, love is a mighty passion ! "
  The countess says mournfully,
Then turns in friendliest fashion
  And hands his lordship his tea.

One place, my dear, at the table
  Was empty, for you stayed away ;
And you of your love had been able
  Such sweet pretty things to say !

LIV

My carriage is slowly rolling
  Through pleasant forest green,
Through flowery valleys transfigured
  By sunlight's magic sheen.

I sit and I dream and I ponder,
  And of my belovéd I think;
Three phantoms come up to the carriage
  And greet me with nod and wink.

They leap and make hideous grimaces,
  Half-scoffing and yet half-shy,
Then rolling together like mist-wreaths
  They grin and go scurrying by.

LVIII

The night it is wet and chilly,
The autumn wind doth moan ;
Wrapt close in my grey mantle
I ride through the wood alone.

And as I go riding, riding,
My thoughts rush onward before,
And carry me lightly, gaily,
To my beloved's door.

The watch-dogs bark, the retainers
Come out and the torches bring ;
I rush up the winding staircase,
Making my spurs to ring.

In the warm carpeted chamber,
So fragrant, so bright to the eye,
The lovely maiden awaits me—
Into her arms I fly.

The wind in the leaves goes sighing,
The oak-tree speaketh, meseems :
" What ails thee, thou foolish horseman,
With these thy foolish dreams ? "

LIX

A star is falling earthward
From its bright heaven above!
This star I see a-falling,
It is the star of love!

The blossoms and leaves in showers
Fall from the apple-tree;
Then come the mischievous breezes
And whirl them about in glee.

The swan sings on the fish-pond
While swimming to and fro,
And ever more softly singing
Dives to his grave below.

Now all is dark and silent!
Leaves, blossoms, are seen no more;
The star has crumbled and vanished,
The song of the swan is o'er.

LXI

'Twas midnight cold and all things slept ;
I wandered through the wood and wept ;
The trees, when they heard my mournful ditty,
Woke up and nodded their heads in pity.

LXIII

Where I am, the shadows darkle
  All around me, cold and frore,
Since thine eyes with their bright sparkle,
  Dearest, flash on me no more.

For me now no longer dawning,
  Love's sweet star hath vanished quite
At my feet the abyss is yawning—
  O receive me, ancient night!

Appendix

Lovely, bright, and golden star,
Greet my dearest from afar,
Tell her that I alter never—
Heart-sick, pale, and hers for ever.

The Twilight of the Gods

NOW May is come with all her golden glory,
Caressing gales and aromatic spices
Breathing enchantment from her snow-white blossoms,
And welcome from a thousand sky-blue violets ;
And spreading out a green and flowery carpet,
With sunlight interwove and morning dew,
She summons her beloved human children.
The simple folk obey her earliest call ;
The men array themselves in nankeen trousers
And Sunday coats with shiny golden buttons ;
The women clothe themselves in blameless white ;
Youths curl the ends of newly-grown moustaches,
And maidens leave their bosoms unconfined ;
The poets of the town fill full their pockets
With paper, pencil, field-glass,—and rejoicing
The variegated crowd moves to the gate,
And, lying down outside upon the greensward,
They marvel at the trees so busy growing,
Play with the pretty flowers so sweet and tender,
Hearken the music of the merry song-birds,
And shout aloud to the blue vault of heaven.

And to me too came May. Three times she knocked
Upon my door, and called me, "I am May,
Come out, pale dreamer, for I fain would kiss thee."
But I unbolted not my door, and cried:
In vain thou temptest me, unholy stranger.
For I have seen right through thee, seen right through
The world's foundations, yea, too much have seen
And seen too deeply, for all joy hath vanished
And everlasting grief torments my heart.
I see right through the hard and stony coverings
Of human hearts and human habitations,
And see in both deceit and lies and sorrow
And in men's faces I can read their counsels,
Many and evil. In the blushing maiden
I see the secret stir of lustful passion;
And on the proud head of inspired youth
I see the nodding bells and motley foolscap;
And nought but shapes grotesque and sickly shadows
Upon this earth I see, nor know I whether
It be a madhouse or an hospital.
I see right through the crust of the old earth,
As if it were of glass, and see the horror
That with her cheerful covering of verdure
May strives in vain to hide. I see the dead men,

Who lie beneath, within their narrow coffins,
Their hands soft-folded and their eyes wide open,
Their vesture white, and white their faces too,
And through their lips the yellow worms are crawling.
I see the son coquetting with his sweetheart
And sitting down upon his father's grave ;
The nightingales around sing mocking songs,
The tender meadow-flowers laugh in malice.
Then the dead father stirs within his grave—
And ancient Mother Earth in anguish winces.

Ah ! poor old Earth, how well I know thy sorrows,
I see the fire that burns within thy bosom,
And all thy thousand veins, I see, are bleeding ;
I see how wide thy wound gapes, whence a torrent
Of flame and smoke and blood comes wildly pouring.
I see the impious giant-children rising,
Thy brood primeval, from the gulfs of darkness,
And brandishing on high their fiery torches ;
They place their iron ladders to the walls
And wildly storm the fortress of high heaven ;
And black dwarfs clamber up, and of a sudden
All the gold stars are turned to dust and perish.
With insolent hands they tear the golden curtain

From God's own temple ; and the host angelic
With loud lamenting fall upon their faces.
And there upon his throne sits the pale God,
His crown torn from his head, his hair dishevelled—
And nearer still presses the raging tumult.
The giants fling abroad their fiery torches
Through the wide courts of heaven, the dwarfs with scourges
Made out of flames of fire chastise the angels,
Who writhe about and struggle in their torment,
Dragged along hither thither by the hair.
And there I see my own dear guardian angel,
With her sweet countenance and golden tresses,
And everlasting love upon her lips,
And look of saving grace in her blue eyes—
And lo ! a grizzly, hateful, grimy cobbold
Seizes her from the ground, my fair wan angel,
Ogles with leering grin her noble body,
And clasps her helpless in a fond embrace—
Then rings a piercing shriek through all the welkin ;
The pillars crumble, earth and heaven together
Collapse, and ancient night resumes her sway.

Ratcliff

THE god of dreams wafted me to a region
Where weeping willows beckoned me a welcome
With their green tapering branches, and the flowers
Looked up at me with sisterly wise eyes,
Where all familiar sounded the birds' warbling,
And not unknown the barking of the dogs,
Where shapes and voices met me with a greeting
As though I were an old friend—yet where all things
Seemed strange to me, wondrous and passing strange.
I stood before a small house, trim and rustic ;
A tumult raged within my heart, but peaceful
The workings of my mind ; with peaceful hand
I shook the dust from off my travelled garments ;
Shrill rang the bell, and open sprang the door.

And there were men and women, well-known faces,
In numbers. Over all a trouble brooded,

A secret voiceless anguish. Strangely moved,
And as it were in pity, they looked at me,
So that my very soul within me shuddered
With boding of some strange calamity.
Old Margaret at a glance I recognised ;
A searching look I gave her, yet she spoke not.
I asked, " Where is Maria ? " but she spoke not.
Lightly instead she took my hand and led me
Through a long suite of rooms, all brightly lighted,
Where pomp and glory reigned and deathly stillness,
Led me at last into a dusky chamber
And pointed with averted countenance
Towards the form which sat upon the couch.
" Art thou Maria ? " I asked, and in my heart
I was astonished at the steadiness
Wherewith I spoke. And dull as stone, and lifeless,
A voice replied, " That is the name they call me."
A pang of sudden pain shot through my heart,
Because that cold and hollow sound was yet
The voice, the once so sweet voice, of Maria !
That woman in the faded lilac gown,
Dressed carelessly with slovenly loose bosom,
Her eyes fixed in a glassy stare, the muscles
Of her wan cheeks relaxed and leatherlike—

Ah me ! that woman was the once so lovely,
The blooming, charming, beautiful Maria !
" How long you were away " she said aloud
With cold and strange familiarity,
" You look no longer ailing, dearest friend,
But strong and well : firm thigh and calf are witness
To your robust health." And a sickly smile
Flickered about her pale and yellow mouth.
In my bewilderment I blurted out :
" They told me you had married. Is it so ? "
" Oh yes," she said indifferently and laughing,
" I've got a wooden stick, with leather covered,
Who calls himself my husband ; but yet wood
Is wood ! " She laughed a horrid soundless laugh,
So that cold agony ran through my soul,
And doubt seized hold of me :—Can these be really
The chaste, the flower-chaste, lips of my Maria ?
But she rose up, and, snatching hastily
Her shawl from off the chair, she wrapped
It round her neck, and clinging to my arm
She dragged me through the street-door that stood open,
And dragged me out through field and wood and mead.

The red sun's glowing disk already floated

Low in the sky; its purple rays illumined
The tree-tops, and the flowers, and the stream
Which far away flowed with majestic sweep.
"Do you see, swimming there in the blue water,
That great gold eye?" cried suddenly Maria.
"Be still, poor soul," said I, and in the twilight
I seemed to see a magic dance of shadows.
For misty shapes were rising from the meadows,
With white soft arms to one another clinging.
The violets tender looks exchanged; with passion
The lilies bowed their chalice-heads together;
On all the roses glowed the glow of pleasure,
The pinks with fragrance strove the air to kindle;
With heavenly perfumes all the flowers were steaming,
And all were weeping silent tears of rapture,
And all with one song, "Love, love, love" exulted.
The butterflies flew hovering round, the brilliant
Gold-beetles hummed their delicate fairy-music,
The evening breezes whispered, the oaks rustled,
With melting voices sang the nightingales—
And all amid the whispering, rustling, singing,
Prattled in tones metallic, cold and hollow,
The withered woman clinging to my arm:
"I know thy nightly doings at the castle;

That long-legged shadow is a simpleton.
He nods and waves at everything one does.
The blue-coat is an angel, but the red-coat
With the drawn sword—he is your bitter foe."
And making still more whimsical strange speeches
Incessantly she prattled, till exhausted
She sank down by me on the mossy bank,
Which underneath the aged oak-tree lies.

There, close together, sat we sad and silent,
Gazed at each other and grew ever sadder.
With sighs like dying groans the oak-tree rustled,
Deep-sorrowing sang the nightingale above.
Then red lights, through the leafage penetrating,
Flickered around Maria's wan white features,
And woke a sparkle in her staring eyeballs,
And, speaking in her old sweet voice, she asked me :
" How didst thou know I was so miserable ?
In thy wild songs I lately read my story."

Then froze my heart within me, horror seized me
At my prophetic madness which the future
Had thus foreseen ; dim thoughts coursed through my brain,
And overwhelmed with terror I awoke.

Donna Clara

IN the twilight garden paces
To and fro the judge's daughter,
Merry din of drum and trumpet
Sounds below from out the castle.

"Wearisome are now the dances,
Wearisome the honied speeches,
And the knights who with glib phrases
Match my beauty with the sunshine.

"Wearisome to me are all things,
Since the hour when in the moonlight
I beheld that knight, whose lute-strings
Lured me yestreen to the window.

"Standing there so slim and radiant,
While his eyes shot lightning-flashes
O'er his pale and noble features,
He St. George himself resembled."

Mused in this wise Donna Clara,
And her eyes were gazing downward;
When she lifts them, lo! the handsome
Stranger knight before her standing.

Hand in hand, with lovers' whispers,
They go wandering in the moonlight;
Zephyrs breathe their soft caresses,
Roses give them faery greetings.

Roses give them faery greetings,
All aglow like love's apostles.—
"Nay, but tell me, dearest maiden,
Why so suddenly thou blushest?"

"'Tis the midges, love, that sting me,
And the midges in the summer
Are as utterly obnoxious
As the Jews with their long noses."

"Never mind the Jew and midges,"
Quoth the knight in playful protest;
From the almond-trees are falling
Showers of blossoms soft as snow-flakes.

Showers of blossoms soft as snow-flakes
Spill on every side their fragrance.—
"Nay but tell me, dearest maiden,
Is thy heart mine, and mine only?"

"Yea, my love, I love thee wholly,
And I swear it by the Saviour
Whom the Jews by God accurséd
Used so spitefully and murdered."

"Never mind the Jews and Saviour,"
Quoth the knight in playful protest.
In the distance sway the dream-like
Snow-white lilies, light-encinctured.

Snow-white lilies, light-encinctured
To the starry heavens look upward.—
"Nay, but tell me, dearest maiden,
Hast thou never once sworn falsely?"

"Nought, know I, my love, of falsehood,
In my veins is not one single
Drop of Moorish blood nor that of
The disgusting Jewish people."

"Never mind the Jews and Moors,"
Quoth the knight in playful protest;
And he leads the judge's daughter
To a shadowy myrtle-bower.

In the toils of love so tender
He hath secretly enmeshed her!
Short their words, and long their kisses,
And their hearts are overflowing.

Bridal anthem, sweet and melting,
Chants the nightingale, fair songstress;
From the earth to lead the torch-dance
Tripping come the little glow-worms.

In the bower it waxes stiller,
Nought is heard but stealthy noises,
Rustlings of the busy myrtle,
Deep-drawn breathings of the flowers.

Of a sudden from the castle,
Bursts the sound of drum and trumpet,
And, aroused from slumber, Clara
Leaps up from her knight's embraces.

"Hark! they call me now, belovéd,
Yet, before we sever, surely
Thou must needs thy dear name tell me
Which thou hast so long kept hidden."

And the knight, serenely smiling,
Kissed the fingers of his mistress,
Kissed her lips and kissed her forehead,
And at last he tells her, saying:

"I, thy chosen lover, lady,
Am the son of that all-famous
Rabbi, learned in the Scriptures,
Israel of Saragossa."

Almansor

IN the great church of Cordóva
There are pillars thirteen hundred,
Thirteen hundred giant pillars
The colossal dome sustaining.

And on dome and walls and pillars
Run the texts from top to bottom,
The Korán's Arabian scriptures,
Cunningly like flowers inwoven.

Moorish kings in days departed
Built this house to Allah's glory,
But great changes have befallen
In time's dark and ceaseless welter.

On the tower, where once the warder
Stood and called to prayer the people,
Now the Christian bells are ringing
With their melancholy clatter.

On the steps, where once the faithful
Sang the gospel of the prophet,
Now the tonsured priests are showing
The stale magic of their masses.

And what press there is and crowding
Round the gaily painted puppets,
What a hum and smoke and tinkle,
What a flare of silly tapers.

In the great church of Cordóva
Stands Almansor ben Abdullah,
Watching quietly the pillars,
Murmuring in quiet whisper :

" O ye pillars, strong, gigantic,
Carven once for Allah's glory,
Now ye needs must serve and honour
Christendom's abhorred religion !

" Ye submit to time's compulsion,
Patiently ye bear your burden ;
Ay, and truly far more easy
To the weaker is submission."

Then his head with mien contented
Bows Almansor ben Abdullah
O'er the carved baptismal basin
In the great church of Cordóva.

II

From the great church strode he quickly ;
Rode forth on his wild black charger ;
In the wind his wet hair floated
And the feathers of his helmet.

On the road to Alkoléa
By the shore of Guadalquiver,
Where there blooms the snow-white almond
And the scented golden orange.

There the merry knight a-riding
Pipes and sings with careless laughter,
Making music with the songbirds
And the loud voice of the water.

In the castle Alkoléa
Dwelleth Clara of Alvares,
In Navarre her sire is fighting,
So she hath a wider freedom.

And Almansor in the distance
Hears the sound of drums and trumpets,
Sees afar the castle's torches
Gleaming through the forest shadows.

In the castle Alkoléa
Dance twelve ladies gaily 'tired
Dance twelve knights all gaily 'tired,
Dances, best of all, Almansor.

On the wings of sprightly humour
He goes flitting round the ballroom,
And contrives to all the ladies
Honied compliments to murmur.

First he kisses Isabella's
Lovely hands; then turning quickly
Sits down opposite Elvira,
And into her eyes looks gaily.

Smiling asks of Leonora:
Whether he to-day hath pleased her?
And the golden cross he shows her
Which is fastened to his mantle.

He declares to every lady:
In his heart he bears her image;
"On my oath, as I'm a Christian,"
Thirty times to-night protesting.

III

In the castle Alkoléa
Silent are the sounds of pleasure,
Lords and ladies all have vanished,
And the lights are all extinguished.

Lady Clara and Almansor
Linger lonely in the ballroom ;
And one solitary last candle
Casts o'er both its pallid glimmer.

On the sofa sits the lady,
While the knight sits on the footstool,
And his sleepy head is lying
On the knees of his belovéd.

Rose-oil from a golden phial
Pours the lady, deeply musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor—
And from his heart's depth he sigheth.

Kisses sweet, with lips of velvet,
Prints the lady, deeply musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor—
And his brow grows overclouded.

Floods of tears from eyes that glisten
Weeps the lady, deeply musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor—
And his lips begin to tremble.

And he dreams : he still is standing,
With his head bowed down and dripping,
In the great church of Cordóva,
And he hears hushed voices speaking :

Hears the mighty giant pillars
Muttering all grim, resentful,
That no longer will they bear it,
And they totter and they tremble ;

And they fiercely break in pieces—
Pale as death turn priests and people—
With great crash the dome collapses,
And the Christian gods flee wailing.

From Romanzen

Belshazzar

THE midnight hour was drawing on ;
All hushed in peace lay Babylon.

But up above in the king's own house
The torches flare and the men carouse.

For there in the royal banquet hall
Belshazzar was holding high festival.

The vassals, they sat in a shining line
And emptied their goblets of sparkling wine.

The shout of the vassals, the goblets' ring,
Enkindled the heart of the headstrong king.

His flushing cheeks began to shine,
His heart to wax bold, inspired by wine.

With blind and wicked pride possessed
He blasphemes God in a ribald jest.

With drunken shout the vassal host
Approve his blasphemous impious boast.

The king called loud with eyes aflame :
The swift slave ran, and back he came.

Many vessels of gold on his head he bore,
From Jehovah's temple the plundered store.

And the king impelled by a wanton whim
Seized a sacred chalice, filled full to the brim.

And draining the cup in breathless wise,
With foaming lips aloud he cries :

" Jehovah ! thy power I here defy,
The King of Babylon am I."

But scarce was this word of horror spoke,
Ere secret remorse in the king's heart woke.

The yelling laughter was suddenly stilled,
And deathly silence the palace filled.

And lo ! and lo ! on the wall so white
A thing like a man's hand came in sight ;

And wrote and wrote on the wall so white
In letters of fire, then vanished quite.

The king sat staring, and held his breath,
With knocking knees and pale as death.

Fear fell on the vassals, their blood ran chill,
With never a word they sat stock still.

The wise men came, but not one of them all
Could interpret the letters of flame on the wall.

But that night, ere the daylight came again,
By the hand of his slaves was Belshazzar slain !

Sonnets to His Mother

I

IT is my wont to carry my head high,
My manners oft are stiff and void of grace,
If the king's self should look me in the face,
I would not cast my eyes down, no, not I.

Yet, mother dear, be it again confessed,
However proud and headstrong I may be,
In thy sweet, blessed, gentle company
Oft-times I am with humble fear possessed.

Is it thy spirit that doth my pride subdue,
Thy lofty spirit that pierces all things through
And flashing soars into the heavens' wide blue ?
Bitter it is, thrice bitter, to recall
How oft my deeds have served thy heart to gall,
That golden heart which loved me more than all.

II

In mood perverse did I from thee depart,
Desiring through the whole wide world to rove,
If I could anywhere discover love,
And like a lover clasp it to my heart!

I sought love everywhere; at every gate,
In every street, I stretched out hands in prayer,
Begging an alms of love, how small soe'er,
They only mocked and gave me chilling hate.

So still I fared in quest of love, and ever
In quest of love, yet did I find love never,
And homeward turned, sick and with pride subdued;
Then didst thou come with welcoming smile to meet me.
And ah! within thine eyes, as thou didst greet me,
Was that sweet love I had so long pursued!

Asra

EVERY day the sultan's daughter,
Wondrous beautiful, was pacing
In the evening by the fountain
Where the waters wan were bubbling.

Every day there stood the slave-boy
In the evening by the fountain
Where the waters wan were bubbling,
Every day his face grew paler.

And one evening, lo ! the princess
Burst on him with sudden challenge ;
" I would fain know what thy name is,
What thy country, what thy kindred."

And the slave-boy said, " They call me
Mahommed ; I come from Yema ;
And my tribesmen are those Asra,
They who when they love must perish."

From Neuer Frühling

XV

The graceful water-lily
Looks dreamily up from the lake ;
The moon smiles down to greet her,
Love-lorn for her dear sake.

Coyly her head she buries
Again beneath the wave—
And lo ! at her feet she sees him,
Her lover so pale and grave.

XXIX

There was an aged monarch,
Heavy his heart and grey his head ;
The poor forlorn old monarch
A youthful maid did wed.

There was a handsome page-boy,
Golden his hair and light his mind ;
He was the young queen's squire,
And bore her train behind.

Know'st thou the old, old ballad ?
So honey-sweet, so sad with fate ?
Both page and queen must perish,
Because of their love too great.

Bimini

Prologue

FAITH in wonders ! that blue flower
Now has withered, but how lovely
Once in human hearts it blossomed,
In the time of which my song is !

Time of faith in wonders ! wondrous
Time itself ! So many wonders
Then abounded that thereat
No one any longer wondered.

Often in the broad cool daylight
Of an ordinary work-day
Men would see things, things of wonder,
Such as in degree of madness

Far exceeded even the maddest
Fairy tales enshrined in legends
Told of pious brain-sick monks,
Or in chronicles of knighthood.

Lo ! one morn in bride-like beauty
From the Ocean's azure billows
There arose a strange sea-wonder,
A whole world completely new.

New the world and all upon it,
New the men, and new the wild-beasts,
New the birds, and new the flowers,
Also new the world's diseases !

And the while our old world also,
Our familiar ancient world,
Metamorphosed and transfigured
Strange and wonderful became

Through the inventions of the Spirit,
Of the modern magic Spirit,
Through the black art of Black Berthold
And the still more subtle black art

Of a Mainz-born Devil-layer ;
Also through the grammary
In those sacred Books prevailing
Brought to us by bearded wizards

From Byzantium and from Egypt
And sagaciously expounded—
One is called the Book of Beauty,
And the Book of Truth the other

But of both is God the author,
God Himself, using two different
Heavenly tongues, and he hath writ them,
We believe, in his own writing.

With the little quivering needle
As his rod of divination
Did the sailor also then
Find his way to India's shore,

To the long-sought land of spices,
Which on every side were growing
In a negligent profusion,
Often with their tendrils creeping

Low upon the earth, fantastic
Herbs and flowers, shrubs and forests,
Which are princes or crown-jewels
In the vegetable-realm ;

Those miraculous rare spices,
Pregnant with mysterious powers,
Giving often health and oftener
Sickness to mankind, according

As the hand which mixes them
Be a skilled apothecary's,
Or that of a stupid fellow
From the land of Hungary.

When the gates of India's garden
One day fell asunder, balmy
Billowy oceans of sweet incense,
Like a deluge of delightful

Luscious aromatic perfumes,
Sense-enchanting, sense-benumbing,
Flooded suddenly the heart,
The old heart of the old world.

Then the blood, as if by fire-brands
Whipt and rods of flame, went racing
Instantly through human veins,
Mad for pleasure, mad for gold.

Yet was gold the only watch-word,
For through gold, that yellow pander,
Each one for himself can purchase
Easily all earthly pleasures.

Gold was thus the first word spoken
By the Spaniard on his entrance
To the wigwam of the Indian—
Afterwards he asked for water.

Mexico and Peru witnessed
This wild orgy of gold-thirst,
Cortez and Pizarro wallowed
Steeped in gold, and gold-besotted.

From the temple-tower of Quito
Lopez Bacca stole the sun
Which twelve hundredweight of gold
Weighed, but on the selfsame evening,

As he played at dice, he lost it.
Hence the saying of the people,
"That is Lopez, who by gambling
Lost the sun before the sunrise."

Ah! These men were mighty gamblers,
Mighty robbers and assassins,
(Nobody is wholly perfect)
Yet the deeds they did were wonders.

Far beyond all acts of prowess
Of the fiercest martial heroes,
From the mighty Holophernes
Down to Haynau and Radetzki

In the time of faith in wonders
There are also wonder-workers;
Who the impossible believes in
Can the impossible accomplish.

Then the fools alone were doubters,
Men of sense were all believers;
At the sight of daily wonders
Wise men bowed their heads believing.

Strange ! to-day from out that wondrous
Time of faith in wonders, ceaseless
Through my mind there runs the story
Of Don Juan Ponce de Leon,

Who had Florida discovered,
But for years and years went seeking
Vainly for the wonder-island,
Bimini, his heart's desire.

Bimimi, thy name sweet-sounding
Makes my heart within my breast
Tremble, and the long-forgotten
Dreams of youth again awaken.

On their heads are withered garlands,
Mournfully they gaze upon me ;
While dead nightingales are fluting
With soft sobs, as if expiring—

And I start up, terror-stricken,
All my feverish limbs so shaking
That the seams of my fool's-jacket
Violently burst asunder.

Yet at last I fall a-laughing
For methinks that parrot's voices
Screech, in mocking tones and yet
Melancholy, " Bimini! "

Help me, Muse, wise mountain-fairy
Of Parnassus, child of heaven,
Stand by me and prove the magic
Of the noble art poetic.

Show thou hast the witch's skill,
Wave thy wand and turn my song
To a ship, a magic ship,
Bearing me to Bimini !

Hardly is the sentence spoken,
Ere my wish hath its fulfilment,
And descending from thought's dockyard
Lo ! the magic ship is launched.

Who will come to Bimini ?
Step in, gentlemen and ladies !
This ship, wind and weather serving,
Carries you to Bimini.

Are you sufferers from gout,
Noble gentlemen ? Fair ladies,
Have you on your forehead white
Found already one small crease ?

Follow me to Bimini,
Quickly there will you recover
From such shameful imperfections ;
Hydropathic is the cure !

Fear nought, gentlemen and ladies,
Sound and solid is my ship :
Out of trochees, strong as oak-trees,
Keel and planks are fabricated.

At the helm is sitting Fancy,
Cheerful Humour swells the sails,
Cabin-boy is Wit, the nimble ;
Is Good Sense on board ? I know not.

Metaphors provide my yard-arms
And hyperboles my main-mast,
Black and red and gold my ensign,
Of Romance the fabled colours—

Tricolor of Barbarossa,
As I once myself have seen it
In Kyffhäuser and at Frankfort
In the great church of St. Paul.

Through the sea of fairy-land,
Through the fairy-land's blue sea,
Glides my ship, my magic ship,
Followed by her dreamlike furrows.

Scattering sparks before my face
In the quivering azure wave,
Splashing, tumbling, play a shoal
Of enormous-headed dolphins—

And astride their backs are riding
My postilions of the water,
Little Cupids, who with puffed cheeks
Blow on quaint horns, made from mussels,

Echoing fanfares—ah, but listen !
From the ocean depths below
Suddenly there comes a pealing
Sound of mirth and tittering laughter.

Ah ! those voices, well I know them,
Those sweet tones of scoffing laughter—
They are pert and saucy Undines,
Unbelieving Nixies, mocking

Me, my fool's-ship, and the fools
Who are passengers aboard it,
Mocking my fool's voyaging
To the isle of Bimini.

I

Lonely on the shore of Cuba,
By the quiet waters' mirror
Stands a man in contemplation
Of his image in the wave.

Old he is, yet in his carriage
Bolt upright and like a Spaniard,
Half a sailor, half a soldier,
In his queer outlandish garments.

Widely bulge his sailor's trousers
Underneath a coat of yellow
Elkskin; shines with rich-embroidered
Gold-brocade his bandoleer.

From it hangs the never-absent
Long bright sword-blade of Toledo,
On his grey felt-hat there flutter
Roguishly the red cock's-feathers.

And they throw a gloomy shadow
O'er an old face, weather-beaten,
Showing marks of time's defacement
And his fellowmen's misusage.

Intersecting with the wrinkles,
By old age and by life's hardships
There imprinted, run the ugly
Scars of sabre-cuts ill-mended.

Truly not with any special
Pleasure does the old man seem
To be gazing in the water
At his pitiful reflection.

But as if to hide it from him
Both hands oft he stretches out;
Then he shakes his head, and sighing
To himself at last he mutters :—

"Is this Juan Ponce de Leon,
Who was court-page at the castle
Of Don Gomez and train-bearer
To the judge's haughty daughter?

"Slim and airy was that lad,
And his gold locks fell in clusters
Round a head filled full of folly
And of rosy-coloured fancies.

"All the ladies of Sevilla
Knew the hoof-beat of his charger,
And they crowded to the windows
When he galloped down the street.

" If he called his dogs by clicking
With his tongue against the palate
Then the hearts of deeply-blushing
Lovely women thrilled with music.

" Is this Juan Ponce de Leon
Once the terror of the Moors,
Whose beturbaned heads he chopped off
Just as if they were but thistles ?

" On the plain before Granada,
And in sight of all the army
Of the Christians, Don Gonzalos
Dubbed me with the rank of knighthood

" On the evening of that same day
In the tent of the Infanta,
I, to music of the fiddle,
Danced with beautiful court-ladies.

" Yet 'twas neither fiddle's music,
Nor the talk of lovely ladies,
That I harkened on the evening
Of that day—but like a young colt

" I went stamping o'er the tent's floor,
And heard nothing but the jingle,
Nothing but the lovely jingle
Of my new and golden spurs.

"With the years came earnestness
And ambition, and I followed
With Columbus on his second
Famous world-discovering voyage.

"With devotion did I serve him,
That new Christopher so mighty,
Who salvation's light was bearing
To the heathen through the water.

"I shall ne'er forget the mildness
Of his glance. He suffered silent,
Only in the night-time telling
To the stars and waves his sorrows.

"When the admiral again came
Home to Spain, then I took service
With Ojeda, and went sailing
With him, seeking for adventure.

"Don Ojeda was a true knight,
Every inch of him, none better
'Mong the knights of the round table
In the days of good King Arthur.

"Fighting, fighting was the pleasure
Of his heart. Serenely smiling
He would fight the hordes of savage
Men who often swarmed around him.

" If a poisoned javelin hit him,
Straight he seized a red-hot glowing
Iron, and therewith his wound
Touched and seared, serenely smiling.

" Once, when more than knee-deep wading
Through a boggy swamp, whose outlet
No one knew, and step by step,
Lacking food, and lacking water,

" We had thirty days already
Dragged along, and of six-score men
More than eighty had already
Fallen on the march and fainted—

" And the bog grew ever deeper,
And we cried aloud, despairing,
Then Ojeda spake and cheered us,
Dauntless and serenely smiling.

" Afterwards I fought as comrade
To Bilbao ; hero he
No less valiant than Ojeda,
And in strategy more skilful.

" For within his head there nested
All thought's mighty brood of eagles,
While the splendour of great courage
Shone within his heart like sunlight.

"To his deeds do Spain's dominions
Owe a hundred kingdoms, larger
Far than Europe and far richer
Than Venetia and than Flanders.

"And by way of compensation
For these hundred kingdoms larger
Far than Europe and far richer
Than Venetia or than Flanders,

"He was given a hempen collar—
Just a rope; and, like a felon,
Bilbao at St. Sebastian
In the market-place was hanged.

"Not so chivalrous a fellow,
And of less heroic spirit,
Yet a captain without equal
Was the Cortez, Don Fernando,

"In the miniature Armada
By which Mexico was conquered
Served I, nor did this adventure
Lack its share of grievous hardships.

"There I got large stores of gold,
And the yellow fever also—
Ah! in Mexico a goodly
Piece of health I left behind me.

"With the gold I bought a vessel,
And equipped it—Then confiding
In my own star, I discovered
Here at last the isle of Cuba,

"Which to this day I am ruling
For Juanna of Castilia
And Fernand of Aragon,
My most condescending patrons.

"I have that attained which men
Ever greedily run after;
Prince's favour, fame, and honour,
And the Calatrava Order.

"I am governor, and owner
Of a hundred thousand pesos,
Bars of gold and precious jewels,
Sacks of pearls of purest lustre.

"Ah! but sad the contemplation
Of these pearls; they set me thinking
How far better had I only
Teeth instead, as in my young days—

"Teeth of youth! with their departure
Youth, as well as teeth, hath vanished—
At the shameful thought I feebly
Gnash their rotten stumps together.

"Teeth of youth, and youth! if only
I could buy you back together,
Gladly would I give instead
All my fairest pearls in sackfuls.

"Yea, and all my wealth of jewels,
All my gold, a hundred thousand
Pesos, and into the bargain
Throw my Calatrava Order—

"Take my riches, fame, position,
Call me not 'Your Excellency';
Call me rather 'You young jackass,'
'You young duffer, blockhead, shaver.'

"O thou Virgin, highly-favoured,
To the fool extend thy mercy,
Who in secret shame is pining
And conceals his idle sorrow!

"Virgin! I my heart will open
To thee only, and confession
Make to thee, which I had never
Made to any Saint in heaven—

"For indeed these Saints but men are,
And, by Bacchus, even in heaven
Shall no man in pity dare to
Laugh at Juan Ponce de Leon.

" Thou, O Virgin, art a woman,
And, albeit immutable
Thy pure beauty, yet thou feelest
With a woman's subtle instinct

" What he suffers, the unhappy
Transient mortal, when his body's
Noble strength and excellence
Fade and dwindle to a shadow !

" Ah, far happier than we
Are the trees, whom altogether
One and the same wind of autumn
Of their leafy robes strips naked—

" All of them stand bare in winter,
There is no young shrub among them,
Whose green leafage is an insult
To his withered forest-comrades.

" Ah ! but with us mortals, each one
Lives his own appointed season ;
While to this one it is winter,
To that other it is spring-time ;

" And the old man feels his weakness
Doubly sad, in contemplation
Of o'erflowing youthful vigour—
O thou Virgin, highly-favoured !

"Banish, prithee, from my members
This old age, whose hand like winter
On my head has heaped the snow,
And my blood has turned to ice—

"Bid the Sun that he rekindle
In my veins the glow of passion,
Bid the Spring that she awaken
In my breast the nightingales.

"And your roses, give them once more
To my cheeks, and give the fair hair
Once more to my head, O Virgin—
Give me once again my youth!"

While Don Juan Ponce de Leon
Spoke in such wise to himself,
Suddenly with sorrow clouded
In his hands his face he buried

And he sobbed and fell a-weeping
With such strong and stormy passion
That the shining tears in torrents
Poured between his skinny fingers

II

On dry land the knight bides faithful
To his old seafaring habits,
And he still, as once on boardship,
Sleeps at night-time in a hammock ;

And the water's undulation
Which to sleep so oft has lulled him,
This the knight cannot dispense with,
So he sets the hammock rocking.

And the charge is given to Kala,
The old Indian woman, who
From the knight keeps off mosquitoes
With her fan of peacock's feathers.

As she rocks the airy cradle
With the wizen babe within it,
She for lullaby is humming
An old folk-song of her country,

Is there magic in the sing-song ?
Or the voice of the old woman
With its shrill pipe, like the twitter
Of a sparrow ? And she sings :

"Little wee bird, Kolibri,
Lead us on to Bimini;
Fly before us, we will follow
In our boats bedecked with banners.

"Little wee fish, Bridibi,
Lead us on to Bimini;
Swim before us, we will follow
With our masts enwreathed in garlands.

"On the isle of Bimini
Spring's delights are ever blooming,
And the golden larks are trilling
Anthems in the azure sky.

"Slender flowers in wild profusion
Clothe the earth there like Savannahs,
Hot with passion steam the perfumes,
Wantonly the colours riot.

"Towering o'er the rest great palm-trees
Stand and wave their fan-like branches,
Blowing to the flowers beneath them
Shadow-kisses, boons of coolness.

"On the isle of Bimini
Springs the loveliest of fountains;
From the precious wonder-well
Flows the youth-restoring water

" If perchance a faded flower
With a few drops of this water
Be bedewed, it blooms again
Radiant with a new-born beauty.

" If perchance a withered twig
With a few drops of this water
Be bedewed, again it puts forth
Tender buds of lovely greenness.

" Should an old man drink this water
He turns young again, and old age
Throws off from him, like a beetle
From his chrysalis emerging.

" Many a greybeard, who a flaxen
Youth has turned again by drinking,
Dares not come back to his country
Looking like a callow stripling.

" Many a little mother likewise,
To her youth restored by sipping,
Is unwilling to go homeward
Looking like an upstart hussy.

" So they linger, these good people,
Evermore in Bimini ;
Joy and springtime hold them prisoners
In the land of youth eternal.

"To the land of youth eternal,
To the isle of Bimini,
All my hopes and longings lead me;
Fare ye well, my friends beloved!

"Mimili, my dear old cat,
Kikriki, my dear old cock,
Farewell, never come we back,
Nevermore from Bimini."

So the woman sang. In slumber
Plunged, the knight her singing hearkens;
And, as if he dreamed, he sometimes
Stammers childlike: "Bimini."

III

Brightly lies, the sunshine lighting
Sea and shore, the isle of Cuba ;
From the blue air sounds like viols
Everywhere to-day are ringing.

Rosy from spring's wanton kisses,
In her emerald-coloured raiment
Gaily 'tired, like a bride,
Blooms and glows the lovely island.

On the shore in shining garments
Folk of every age and station
Swarm, and yet the hearts within them
Beat as if with one pulsation.

For one thought of consolation
All has seized and all made happy
Equally. 'Tis manifested
In the quiet joyful trembling

Of an ancient Beguin woman,
Who goes hobbling on her crutches,
While her rosary-beads she fingers,
And her Paternoster mumbles—

It is also manifested,
This same thought of consolation,
In the laughter of the lady,
Who in gilded palanquin

Borne, and in her mouth a flower
Holding, flirts with the Hidalgo,
While he walks in cheery humour,
Curling his moustache, beside her.—

Like a smile upon a soldier's
Stolid features, joy is shining
On the faces of the clergy,
Now for once unwrinkled, human.

With what glee the thin black-coated
Parson rubs his hands ! how gaily !
How the Capuchin, pot-bellied,
Smugly strokes his double-chin !

Even the bishop, who looks sullen
As a rule, when celebrating,
If on that account his breakfast
Has to suffer some delay—

Even the bishop smiles all radiant,
Radiant sparkle the carbuncles
On his nose, and in his festal
Robes he toddles on contented

'Neath the purple canopy,
Censed by choristers, and followed
By a multitude of clergy,
Who with gold brocade are covered,

And above their heads are holding
Golden-coloured parasols,
Looking almost like enormous
Mushrooms, which have gone out walking.

To God's table the procession
Winds its way, to the high altar,
Which beneath the open heaven
On the beach was here erected,

And with flowers was decorated,
Images of Saints, palms, ribands,
Silver vessels and gold spangles,
And wax candles gaily shining.

Here his Eminence the Bishop
Sings High Mass upon the sea-shore,
And with incense and with prayer
He will here pronounce the blessing

On the little fleet of vessels,
Which, within the roadstead tossing,
Are upon the point of sailing
To the isle of Bimini.

Yes, the ships there, they are truly
Those which Juan Ponce de Leon
Has equipped and duly manned
For discovery of the island,

Where the youth-restoring water
Springs delicious—Many thousand
Blessings from the shore pursue him,
Him, the human race's saviour,

Him, the world's brave benefactor—
All have hopes the knight may bring them,
When he comes again to Cuba,
Youth's elixir in a phial—

Some in thought already swallow
That sweet cordial, and are skipping
For sheer pleasure, like the anchored
Craft within the roadstead lying.

Five in number are the vessels
Which compose the fleet—one heavy
Caravel, with two feluccas,
And two little brigantines.

Flagship of the fleet the heavy
Caravel, upon whose ensign
Are the coats of arms of Castille,
Arragon and Leon blazoned.

Like a tabernacle-booth
She is decked with birchen branches
And festooned with flowery garlands
And with gaily-flapping streamers.

Frau Speranza is her name,
And there stands the lady's image
At the stern as figurehead,
Large as life, and carved of oak-wood,

And all painted with the very
Choicest of well-varnished colours,
Which defy the wind and weather,—
An impressive spectacle.

Brick-red are her face's features,
Brick-red are her neck and bosom,
Which from a green bodice spring;
And her gown is also green.

Green the wreath too round her head,
Pitch-black is her hair, and pitch-black
Likewise are her eyes and eyebrows;
In her hand she holds an anchor.

The flotilla's crew consists of
Nine-score persons altogether,
More or less; among them are
Six priests only, and six women.

Eighty men and but one lady
On the caravel are sailing,
Which Don Juan Ponce de Leon
Doth himself command. The lady's

Name is Kala—yes, the ancient
Kala has become a lady,
Called Señora Juanita,
Ever since the knight created

Her High Mistress of the Fly-fan
And Chief Cradle-rocking Lady,
And Cupbearer to the future
Youthful folk of Bimini.

In her hand she holds a golden
Cup as symbol of her office,
And she also wears a tunic
Highly girdled, like a Hebe.

Brussels lace of priceless value,
Strings of pearls, full many a dozen,
Clothe and seem to mock the withered
Dusky charms of the Señora.

Rococo—anthropophagic,
Caraibisch—Pompadour,
Rises her well-padded head-dress,
Interlaced with countless little

Birds diminutive as beetles,
Looking in the flashing beauty
Of their rainbow-coloured plumage
Just like flowers made out of jewels.

This fantastic head-dress, wrought
All of birds, exactly matches
With the cockatoo-like features,
Quaint and wonderful, of Kala.

To this scarecrow no unworthy
Pair is Juan Ponce de Leon,
Who, implicitly believing
In his quick rejuvenescence,

In advance has donned already
Clothes to pleasant youth more fitting,
And has gaily decked himself
In the freakish garb of fashion:

Pointed shoes, with bells of silver,
Like a dandy's, and slashed breeches,
Showing different-coloured legs,
One—the right leg—red, and green,

Striped with bars of green, the left—
Satin jacket puffed out nicely,
Dashing short cloak o'er his shoulders—
Cap stuck with three ostrich-feathers.

Thus caparisoned, and holding
In his hands a lute, goes skipping
Up and down the admiral,
Dealing out his naval orders.

He commands that they weigh anchor
At the very self-same moment
When from shore the signals flashing
Tell that High Mass is concluded.

He commands that, as they set sail,
All the ships with all their cannons,
Firing six-and-thirty volleys,
Shall salute the isle of Cuba.

He commands—and laughs and top-like
Spins upon his heel—his senses
With sweet hope of the enchanting
Dream-drink quite intoxicated.

And he makes his wretched lute-strings
Whimper sadly as he plucks them,
And his cracked old voice he raises,
Bleating out the sing-song doggrel :

" Little wee bird Kolibri,
Little wee fish Bridibi,
Fly and swim ahead, and show us
How to go to Bimini."

IV

Juan Ponce de Leon truly
Was no fool, no flighty dreamer,
When he went on his wild-goose chase
To the isle of Bimini.

As to that isle's true existence
No misgivings had he ever—
His old Kala'a lullaby-song
Was his bond and guarantee.

More than other men, the sailor
Is in wonders a believer;
Always present to his sight
Flame the great celestial wonders,

While incessantly around him
Murmurs the mysterious ocean,
From whose bosom once there came forth
Lady Venus Aphrodite.

In the following trochaics
We will tell the simple story
How the knight endured much hardship,
Manifold distress and trouble—

Ah ! instead of finding medicines,
Old infirmities for healing,
He, poor soul, encountered many
New diseases and afflictions.

While for youth he was a-seeking,
Daily was he growing older,
Till with wasted form and wrinkled
To the land he came at last ;

To the quiet land, where sheltered
Under spreading cypress-shadows
Flows a stream, whose water also
Has the magic gift of healing—

That good water's name is Lethe !
Drink thereof, and thou forgettest
All thy sorrow, yea and likewise
All that thou hast ever suffered

O good water ! O good land !
He who once hath come there leaves it
Nevermore.—This land in sooth
Is the isle of Bimini.

Printed in Great Britain by

UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED

WOKING AND LONDON

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Fine schedule: 25 cents on first day overdue
50 cents on fourth day overdue
One dollar on seventh day overdue.

NOV 25 1947

NOV 26 1947

20May'55 JH

MAY 6 1955 LU

REC'D LD

OCT 1 1956

REC'D LD

APR 26 1961

REC'D LD

OCT 17'63 -10 PM

SEP 2 1967 88

REC'D

SEP 1'67 -2 PM

LOAN DEPT.

MAR 9 71 -3 PM 57

716895

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY